

# FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF  
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## THE DANISH COUNCIL OF NURSING

THE following account, which appeared in a German magazine, the *Zeitschrift für Krankenpflege*, written by the superintendent nurse of the Military Hospital of Copenhagen, gives so full and graphic an account of the progress of Danish nurses that we give it with only a slight condensation.

The individual Danish nurse is a beautiful type of womanhood. Most Danish women speak one or two foreign languages and many know English well. It is to be hoped that the Danish Council of Nurses will soon extend its interest to nurses of other countries and join in the International Council of Nurses.

A great change and improvement has taken place in our nursing institutions during the last few years, chiefly at the instigation of the nurses themselves, who have founded an association for the benefit and advancement of their interests.

This association—"The Danish Council of Nursing"—is now about six years old, has from its very beginning been conducted by former and by active nurses, and the great importance and extension it has attained is exclusively due to these directing nurses under the leadership of their energetic and intelligent head, Mrs. Professor Tscherning (formerly a superintendent nurse).

This lady, president of the association since October, 1899, has worked hard to bring it forward for the benefit of both nurses and patients.

Nurses can join the Society either as ordinary or as associate members.

The rules of admission for ordinary members are:—The nurse must be of an age between twenty-five and forty years, and possess a three years' training at a hospital, besides conforming to the requirements as to ability and training which the Managing Committee at any time may demand.

The ordinary members wear a badge when at work—a golden

four-leaved clover in red setting, with the circular inscription: "Danish Council of Nursing."

The associate members are pupil nurses who have not yet attained their full training; they wear no badge.

The Managing Committee consists of seven persons, all ordinary members of the Society. Besides, there is a board of twenty-one representatives, elected by the different members among hospital nurses and private nurses that attend to their separate interests. All important matters are laid before this Board of Representatives by the Committee, and are settled by both conjointly.

The association receives an annual Government grant of 6,000 kr., and numbers about 1,000 nursing members, besides more than 200 contributing members among the public, who assist the good work in this manner.

Its activity at present comprises—

1. Monthly meeting of the members.
2. An office and home for private nurses.
3. A home for nurses receiving supplementary (post-graduate) training.
4. Help towards supplementary training.
5. Sick club and help for convalescents.
6. Loan fund.
7. Dietetic cooking classes.
8. A journal of nursing.
9. A home of recreation for nurses.
10. A burial fund.

I will now specify the different parts of the work.

The Office and Home for Private Nurses was originally built on a plan of nursing by the hour, as it was supposed that many patients of small means would not care to have a nurse for the whole day. In many cases it would suffice for a nurse to come in the morning and evening, or to stay for an hour once in the day to arrange the patient, make the bed, attend to dressing, &c.

There were likewise many elderly nurses who no longer could stand night duty or full nursing without being quite unfit for work. Such nurses might well manage some nursing visits daily, thus still earning their bread, besides affording cheap aid to the sick. The plan worked well and practically. In the first year four or five Sisters paid about 4,000 such visits.

Many other private nursing societies took up this kind of work, and our part in it has in consequence diminished, but we had become

known most favorably both to physicians and to the sick, who only regretted that no nurses were to be had for full nursing. After many applications the office took up this branch of nursing, and many Sisters are now actually engaged in full nursing. But many more might be employed if they were forthcoming. It is to be hoped that the number of nurses will increase. These nurses are only taxed 5 per cent. against 10 or 15 in other associations, and find it a pecuniary advantage to be employed by our office. Rooms are to be had for the Sisters at the Home, and on their free days they can take their meals there, and enjoy pleasant companionship.

A Home for nurses receiving a finishing course at a hospital or a lying-in institution is also connected with the office.

This supplementary training is a most important part of our work.

Owing to the want of system in the training received at the hospitals, there were formerly many private nurses who had only a partial training, either solely surgical or medical. These nurses, if well recommended and capable, now receive the needed instruction by means of the Society, not only the surgical and medical, but also special courses in the treatment of skin diseases, of nervous and mental disorders, and the care of puerperal patients.

Some get a year or six months, others only a few months of supplementary training, besides free station and an allowance for the time. During the last year thirty-five Sisters have been assisted by the Society, and twenty-five have been domiciled at the office.

The office contains, besides the home for private nurses with the bedrooms, a common dining-room and a sitting-room, with a piano. Many foreign and home periodicals are laid out for perusal. The sick club is recognized and assisted by the Government, and private as well as hospital Sisters are admitted as members and aided in case of illness.

From the loan fund nurses can obtain loans free from interest when in difficulties, owing to illness, or when they lack means to study nursing in foreign countries.

The Society has lately instituted dietetic and cooking classes for the benefit of the great number of nurses who lack skill in the preparation of food, and sorely miss this knowledge in private nursing. As will be seen by this account, every effort is made to train the Sisters as thoroughly and comprehensively as possible, and to raise their standard.

The popularity of the nurses became evident three years ago when a collection was made for a "Home of Recreation" for the Sisters.

The want of such a home had often been felt by the many nurses who had no family home and no means to board in the country.

A large, beautifully-situated plot of land was presented to the Society, and in a few months money enough was in hand for the building of the house. This house was inaugurated in September, 1904, and is kept open all the year. It can take in twenty Sisters. It contains many spacious, handsome bedrooms for one or two persons, sitting-room with closed and open verandah, a dining-room, and many balconies. The nurses only pay a minimum for their board, and it is hoped that free places will be founded by means of legacies. The Sisters look forward to many enjoyable and comfortable vacations in their own Home.

The journal of nursing published by the Society, has proved itself to be an invaluable medium for assimilating the nurses individually with the whole class. It is edited by a former sick nurse, and is sent to all members. It has also other subscribers.

Once a month (with the exception of the four summer months) an assembly is held for the members. The entertainment consists in instructive lectures, discussions of professional matters, musical and vocal contributions, readings, or other cheerful pastimes.

These assemblies are frequented by a great number of Sisters, and greatly promote a feeling of unity.

From this short review it will be seen that the Danish Council of Nursing is active in a great many ways, but, nevertheless, it has many hopes and wishes for the future. A systematic training-school of its own is the favourite ambition of the council and will surely be realized in time. Until now the council has only been able to offer suggestions at some hospitals concerning improvements in the training department.

Though still far from having attained all their wishes and desires, the Sisters yet feel that their association is a great help and support; they are no longer units, solitary workers at the mercy of circumstances, but begin to feel themselves a growing power, working for the common good—the better training and improved condition of all members.

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#### ITEMS

The German Nurses' Association is making steady progress. It now numbers 746 nurses. The most important public recognition it has yet received is the recent action of the new and magnificent city hospital of Düsseldorf, which is arranging to staff its wards with members of

the organization until its own modern training school is under way. The hospital is to be opened next October, and will require fifty nurses then and twenty more, later. Nurses who apply for these positions are to go in groups of six to work in a Bonn hospital for four weeks, under the direction of the future director and medical chief of the new hospital. Their expenses for this test work are paid by the city of Düsseldorf.

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It is sad to hear from a nurse who has lately travelled in Italy that the new Policlinic Hospital in Rome, now open, is being nursed in the same dirty and distressing way as the old Italian hospitals. The Policlinic was described in the *JOURNAL* just after its completion as one of the most beautiful and perfect hospitals in the world. It is a pity the Italian men do not realize what the French have now learned, that modern sanitary science needs modern, intelligent trained nursing to complete its hospital work.

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Mrs. Strong, the matron of the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, has called a meeting of the matrons of the Glasgow hospitals to discuss State Registration and the defining of a curriculum.

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The work of Public School Nurses is receiving much consideration in England, and the Council of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute has circulated a leaflet advocating the employment of Queen's Nurses under the education authorities to develop school work.

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The nurses of South Africa are justly aggrieved that nurses coming out from England are exempted from the examinations which the nurses of the country are required to pass for registration and are placed on the State Register with the Colonial nurses who have taken their examination. This is, indeed, a most surprising injustice, and it is hard to understand how it arose, as there is no scarcity of nurses in South Africa, but rather the reverse. We are not surprised that the nurses of South Africa protest against the "unfair exemption of immigrants." For English trained nurses to go to Africa and claim a position of superior privilege to the Colony trained nurse can only make trouble.